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ABSTRACT

This report synthesizes research on attracting and maintaining quality teachers in a profession increasingly labeled mediocre, reviews pertinent literature, and suggests ways principals can motivate teachers, and makes recommendations for reducing current science and math shortages. Those entering the teaching profession are no longer drawn strictly from the ranks of women and minorities facing traditional career restraints. New teachers enter teaching for reasons ranging from personal growth potential to youth development opportunities. Ironically, competent students may avoid the profession because it lacks economic and prestige incentives. On the other hand, older teachers may remain for positive or negative reasons--often depending on the staff's quality--the best teachers citing intrinsic rewards that make teaching not a job but a calling. Research finds that only when such factors are diminished do extrinsic concerns like salary and working conditions become truly significant. If money is not the prime motivator of teacher excellence, principals can be, if they regard teachers as professionals, for example, and encourage creative instruction. Researchers generally agree on recommendations for professional improvement as a whole. Finally, math and science teacher shortages may at least partially be overcome if certain guidelines are addressed. (KS)

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ATTRACTING AND MAINTAINING A QUALITY TEACHING STAFF:
A Synthesis of Research

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May 1984

TO: ACSA Representative Assembly

The Research, Evaluation, and Accreditation Committee has completed a number of studies this year. Documents representing the finished products of each of the subcommittees, as listed with their chairpersons, are included for your duplication and use. The subcommittee reports contained herein have been reviewed, edited, and approved by the full state committee.

Subcommittees:

Research: Joe Mrskos, Chairperson

- "Grade Retention: Research, Policies, and Decision Making"
- "Attracting and Maintaining a Quality Teaching Staff: A Synthesis of Research"
- "A Research Paper on Time on Task and the Extended School Day/Year and Their Relationship to Improving Student Achievement"
- "Research and Special Studies Committee 1983-84 Activity Report"

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Testing: Earl Owens, Chairperson

- "Comprehensive Assessment Program Position Paper. The Proposed Change to a Comprehensive Assessment System"
- "Testing Committee 1983-84 Activity Report"

The committee has also accomplished additional activities such as meetings with State Department of Education personnel, assistance in research, developing region committees, review of evaluation issues, and review of pertinent legislation. Through the subcommittee structure, committee members have been most productive in their contributions to the association.

Caroline DeOlden Chairperson
ACSA State Committee
Research, Evaluation, and Accreditation

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RESEARCH ON ATTRACTING & MAINTAINING
A QUALITY TEACHING STAFF

TEACHER MOTIVATORS (Low-cost or No-cost Rewards)

- Consistent and supportive administration in discipline, leadership, morale
- Community recognition and support
- Freedom and independence to innovate
- Personalized inservice programs
- Collaborative planning and decision making by administration and staff
- Challenging and tapping personal resources of teachers
- Meaningful, fair, positive, and productive evaluation
- Clearly stated goals and objectives
- Elimination of chores unrelated to teaching
- Recognition of special needs or concerns
- Recognition of good ideas, enthusiasm and success

TEACHER MOTIVATORS (High-cost, Extrinsic Rewards)

- Higher starting salary and/or merit/incentive pay
- Extended/increased teacher benefits
- Mini-grants for special projects
- Reduced student-teacher ratio
- Upgraded school facilities, equipment and teaching materials

Attracting and Maintaining a Quality Teaching Staff: A Synthesis of Research

by Katherine Clay

Rarely, if ever, has education come under such scrutiny as at present. Studies advocating educational reform are proliferating, which in turn is generating a spate of books, articles, speeches, and papers either agreeing with, questioning, or refuting the conclusions of these studies. Probably the most quotable phrase from this string of national studies is "the rising tide of mediocrity" which is threatening our nation's schools. There is little disagreement that our educational system is in trouble, and that the time is ripe for renewal--including staffing our schools with quality teachers. There is a good deal disagreement, however, regarding the methods by which to address this problem of improving education.

It is not the purpose of this paper, however, to review the studies on educational reform. The major purpose of this paper is to review the literature on (1) what attracts individuals to the field of teaching; (2) what deters individuals from entering the teaching profession, and (3) what keeps the present teaching staff in the profession. Also included are a list of specific suggestions about what has been done, what is being done, and what can be done by principals (primarily) to maintain a quality staff; and a list of suggestions which have been made to alleviate the shortage of math and science teachers. The paper concludes with the suggestion that it is possible that for the majority of the 2+ million teachers presently in U.S. classrooms, the key to educational reform may lie primarily in the hands of today's administrator.

WHAT ATTRACTS INDIVIDUALS TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION?

The research suggests that the teaching profession historically has been populated primarily by those who are intrinsically motivated, by those attracted by the "helping professions," and by those for whom other professions were not available. In the United States, until recently, teachers were female and gave up income and advancement opportunities in return for the fulfillment of ideals related to service, a convenient work schedule, and a certain esteem. It served as a route from blue collar to white, especially among immigrant groups. There also was a blocked career path for educated women and minorities (Sykes, 1983). Today, however, with the many opportunities in a variety of professions that have opened up for both minorities and women, coupled with the decline in enrollment in most elementary and secondary schools, these factors no longer attract people to the field of teaching.

So why are individuals now entering the teaching profession? Lortie (Fruth, 1982) identified six major reasons why teachers go into the profession: (1) they like working with people, may have enjoyed teaching Sunday school or performing as teaching assistants in high school, and like aiding in the growth and development of children; (2) they have an interest in the subject matter, and the occupation of teaching provides the unique opportunity to combine an interest in a particular subject or content area with a job in which they can share this enthusiasm with others; (3) they had positive role

models--former teachers, family members who were/are teachers; (4) they enjoyed the time schedules--summers off and holidays interspersed throughout the school year; (5) they saw a potential for personal growth; and (6) job security. Of these six major reasons, those mentioned most often were working with students and an interest in the subject matter.

In a 1981 study by Douglas Heath (Fruth, 1982) three related factors were identified: (1) helping the responsive child discover talent and skills; (2) receiving the respect of parents; and (3) the freedom and independence to innovate, to continue to grow, and to be part of a traditionally respected profession.

WHAT DETERS HIGH QUALITY INDIVIDUALS FROM ENTERING THE TEACHING PROFESSION?

Lack of money, claim the authors of many of the recent education reform studies, is the major deterrent to attracting bright new competent students to the field of education. Others claim there are deeper, more insidious reasons for the flight away from teacher education programs.

"Teachers are getting yanked in opposite directions--first for not being diligent enough in the march back to basics; then, because their students are performing dismally on national assessment tests that measure critical thinking" (Malkofsky, 1983). Conflicting expectations by the community of what the schools are for make the conscious decision to become a teacher a difficult one.

Purvis (1980) also identifies reasons which explain why prospective teachers are not entering the profession: (1) economics; (2) emotional drain; (3) legal issues--for example, violating a student's individual rights, sometimes resulting in lawsuits; (4) lack of incentive--no career ladders, or promotional possibilities, and a salary based on years of experience rather than on ability; (5) lack of public respect. Sykes (1983) states it more strongly: "You cannot attract a sizable number of talented college graduates to an occupation that features low wages, questionable working conditions, declining occupational prestige, declining public support, and diminished opportunities for the exercise of professional judgment. This, however, is the picture of teaching that I see in our time."

WHAT KEEPS THE PRESENT TEACHING STAFF IN THE FIELD OF TEACHING?

The answers to this question paint both a bleak and a rosy picture--depending upon whether the present teaching staff is of high or low quality. First a look at the bleak picture: General perceptions would indicate that teachers stay in teaching because (1) they have been teaching so long that their salary is adequate-to-good; (2) they have been teaching so long that they are convinced that there is nothing else they could do to receive their adequate-to-good pay; (3) the location is good; (4) the "livin' is easy" for teachers who do the same thing year after year. Every profession--medical, legal, technical--has its inefficient, unethical, incompetent members. Teaching is no different. On balance, every profession has its motivated, dedicated, creative, and innovative members. Teaching is no different. Malkofsky (1983) states it more strongly: "We have a nation of good, solid teachers. Certainly there are misfits and

semi-illiterates who have finessed their way into what, up till now, has been an unpoliced profession; but they are the exceptions. The core of our teacher ranks--the so-called tide of mediocrity--consists of capable people who want to do, and are able to do, what is right for our children."

So, more important than what keeps teachers in general in the field, is what keeps the motivated, dedicated, creative and innovative teacher in the field?

The research studies reviewed for this synthesis were overwhelmingly in agreement that the primary type of reward available to teachers is intrinsic. Teachers feel rewarded when they perceive themselves as being instrumental in students' learning achievements. Culturally, teaching has a tradition of being an occupation for those who want to be of service, not for those who desire money, prestige, or power. The authors do not imply that teachers should not have money, prestige, or power; it is meant to suggest that intrinsic rewards related to a teacher's sense of personhood, professional identity, personal meanings and hopes, make teaching more of a calling than a job. If these core concerns which make teaching a "calling" are diminished, extrinsic rewards such as salaries, working conditions, hours, and control over duties emerge as much more significant issues (Fruth, 1982). Merit pay, incentive pay, and differentiated salary systems have generally failed in education. That is because of the erroneous assumption that although money is a motivator, it is not an effective motivator, nor can it do everything in alleviating discontent in the teaching ranks.

Teacher motivation is discussed by numerous authors (Bredeson, 1983; Frase, 1982; Fruth, 1982; Hayes, 1979; Kaiser, 1981; Thompson, 1979; and Weller, 1982) who base their research papers or articles or speeches on the theories of Maslow and Herzberg.

Kaiser compares Herzberg's "hygiene factors" to Maslow's "needs hierarchy." Hygiene factors are conditions of employment--salary, fringe benefits, a good working environment, good human relations. Maslow's needs hierarchy lists (in ascending order): (1) physiological; (2) safety; (3) belongingness, social, love; (4) ego; and (5) self-actualization. Herzberg's hygiene factors parallel the first three levels of Maslow's needs hierarchy. Kaiser explains that salary tends to operate at the lowest physiological level of needs. Once these low-level needs are satisfied, salary no longer motivates, though it can temporarily prevent dissatisfaction.

So if salary is not a prime motivator, what is? The principal is the prime motivator. Studies indicate that the teacher is the key to teaching excellence and the principal is the key to teacher excellence.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRINCIPALS TO MOTIVATE

There are numerous ways for principals to motivate the teaching staff, thereby increasing teacher satisfaction:

1. Provide for a pleasant and stimulating and supportive work environment. Teachers have a right to a work environment that is free from safety

hazards, provides enough space, and is free from verbal or physical abuse from students. This atmosphere also must provide for a free flow of ideas, experiments (and attendant failures) and innovation.

2. Encourage teachers to participate in the management and decision making in the school, thereby developing a sense of collegiality on the staff.

3. Treat teachers as professionals. This could be done by providing them with clerical assistance, reducing interruptions, facilitating assignment shifts, and seeking their input on school operations.

4. Design inservice programs to meet the specific needs of individual teachers, and then acknowledge their efforts at self-improvement. Rewards--such as meaningful inservice programs--by their very nature are integrally tied to individual value systems. Compensation should be provided in the form of time, money, assistance, and/or attendance at professional meetings. Research findings indicate that the ability to meet one's personal needs through opportunities for growth is key to maintaining successful teachers in the profession.

5. Provide for professional freedom and for participating in decisions regarding course assignment, thus expanding areas of responsibility, broadening programs, and tapping personal resources which teachers routinely are not required to use.

6. Praise and encourage good and innovative teaching, positive teacher behavior, and contributions to the school. Direct teachers' attention toward less concrete rewards; for example, by recognizing their accomplishments, or publicizing their accomplishments in the community.

7. Set high expectations. Encourage teachers to set objectives and then help them to meet these objectives. As the educational leader of the school, the principal has the professional responsibility and the moral obligation to support teachers' need for professional development and personal growth as well as to provide the means to fulfill these needs.

REFORM STUDIES AGREE

The reform studies look at the whole of education: class size, time on task, curriculum revision, teacher and administrator training and retraining, teacher and administrator evaluation, and teacher and administrator remuneration, among other things. When looking only at the recommendations for the teaching profession itself, however, there is general agreement on the following:

1. The curriculum must be strengthened to ensure that students master oral and written English. The curriculum also should ensure student knowledge of literature, history, mathematics and science, foreign language, the arts, civics, non-Western studies, health, and technology.

2. There must be programs designed for retraining present teachers to improve their teaching skills.

3. Teachers (both future and present) must be required to take proficiency exams to ensure a mastery of the same basic skills they are teaching to their students.

4. Standards for admission to U.S. teacher training institutions must be tightened, and the programs in these institutions must be strengthened.

5. There must be better pay for teachers. This "better pay" can come in the form of merit pay; it can come in the form of incentive pay (such as bonuses for new teachers) or differential pay (such as paying some teachers--for example math and science teachers--more than others), or through the development of career ladders, with mentor teachers or master teachers on the top rung.

SUGGESTED METHODS FOR FILLING THE NEED FOR MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS

Some authors caution that the need for math and science teachers in our public schools may be temporary, and that care should be taken not to fill this need at the expense of teachers in other disciplines. Nevertheless the need for math and science teachers is real, and following are some suggestions which have been made to alleviate this shortage.

1. Provide scholarships to university courses for those who agree to teach math or science when course work is completed. A variation on this theme is to provide loans to students in math and science and forgive these loans based on the number of years these students teach in public schools after completing their course work. Another variation on this theme is to reduce tuition at colleges and universities for math and science students.

2. Provide incentive bonuses or differential pay for new math and science teachers, thus paying teachers in high need areas more than those in other disciplines.

3. Exempt math and science teachers from non-teaching tasks, such as hall patrol or cafeteria duty.

4. Modify state certification requirements to permit graduates in mathematics and science to teach at the secondary level without having to take professional education preparation courses while in college.

5. Retrain existing certified teachers through subsidizing tuition, or through grants or loans or stipends.

6. Implement a program where business employees could teach part-time in the schools--or allow present math and science teachers the opportunity to work part-time (late afternoons or summers) in business to augment their teacher salaries.

7. Set up a network of residential math and science academies for gifted students.

8. Develop a statewide corps of teachers in math and science who would be

hired by the state board of education. These teachers would receive extra pay and would be assigned to areas of the state where they were most needed.

"With the shocking statistics on how few new mathematics and science teachers are emerging from teacher education institutions, and with the new-found ability of longtime teachers to snub the profession in favor of higher paying, less nerve-wracking jobs with computer companies, state and local education officials have begun to search for answers to a problem that probably will get worse before it gets better" (Levin, 1982).

CONCLUSION

The reform studies, with their emphasis on merit pay, master teachers, strengthening of curriculum, improved standards for teacher education institutions, stiffer admission requirements for those entering these improved teacher education institutions, and proficiency exams for present teachers, certainly are attacking the problem of "the rising tide of mediocrity," but for the majority of the 2+ million teachers presently in the classroom, the key to educational reform may rest primarily in the hands of today's administrator.

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